



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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December 17, 2003

## **TWO LOCAL COMPANIES MAKE DONATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONNECTICUT NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS AND FAMILIES**

HARTFORD, Conn., - Mr. Lon Pelton from First Experience of Glastonbury and Mr. Ken Crowley from the Crowley Auto Group will make contributions and donations to Connecticut National Guard soldiers and their families on Thursday, Dec. 18, 2003 at 11:30 a.m. at the Hartford Armory.

Pelton created and is contributing a Freedom Tree to the Connecticut National Guard. The tree is made of scrap-metal and is decorated with various non-traditional ornaments like doorknobs, locks and keys and is valued at \$10,000.

The Freedom Tree was specifically created to remind Americans of their freedom and to remember the men and women serving overseas. Pelton also created the tree with a holiday wish for the United States and the entire world in mind.

“This tree expresses my hope that some day this country and the entire world can be so free that there won’t be any need for doorknobs, locks or keys,” said Pelton. “All the locks, keys and doorknobs that are part of the tree are not necessary in a free society, but do make good ornaments for a Freedom Holiday Tree.”

The Freedom Tree is also aiding Operation ELF, a special effort organized by Lt. Governor Jodi Rell to help the active duty Connecticut soldiers and their families

(MORE)

**CONNECTICUT ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**



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during the holiday season.

“My staff and I felt that we had to do something special for the families who are being separated by no fault of their own,” Ira Yellen, President of First Experience said.

“We often forget that the men and women who are sacrificing their lives in the Middle East conflicts for us, should not be forgotten and that any acknowledgement, assistance and support we can provide is the least we can do.”

Pelton is a life-long resident of Windsor, Conn., who began his artistic career with a simple metal sculpture of a turtle in 1959. Pelton is best known for his politically inspired artistic expressions.

Ken Crowley, President of the Crowley Auto Group will be donating a truckload of toys to families of deployed soldiers who are currently stationed in Southwest Asia and will be presenting \$150 of AT&T international phone cards with more than 2,500 minutes.

Crowley collected toys from all seven Crowley car stores throughout Connecticut. Crowley also did several radio promotions beginning Thanksgiving Day to help contribute to Operation Elf.

“I want help our deployed soldiers and their families here at home any way I can,” said Crowley.

(MORE)

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Crowley will also present a check for \$1,000 to the Connecticut National Guard Foundation.

“The outpouring of support from Connecticut businesses such as First Experience and Crowley Auto Group exemplifies American patriotism and serves to reassure our service members that we appreciate their sacrifices and courageous service in support of the Global War on Terrorism,” said Maj. Gen. William A. Cugno, Adjutant General and Commander of the Connecticut National Guard.

This event is open to the media.

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